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ABSTRACT

Intended to assist educators at all levels to teach students who are quiet, the first part of this book (The Quiet Ones: Why Are They So Quiet?) presents a summary of current theory and research concerning quiet children and their low willingness to communicate. The second part of the book (Working with Quiet Children) includes specific suggestions for facilitating these children's classroom functioning. Sections of the book are: Why are Children Quiet?; Different Kinds of Quiet Children; Effects of Quietness; Quiet People in School; Self-Analysis for Teachers; Identifying Quiet Students; Personal Report of Communication Fear Measure; Developing a Communication-Responsive Classroom; Working with Communication-Apprehensive Children; and Referring Students for Special Help. A list of 27 recommended readings is attached. (RS)

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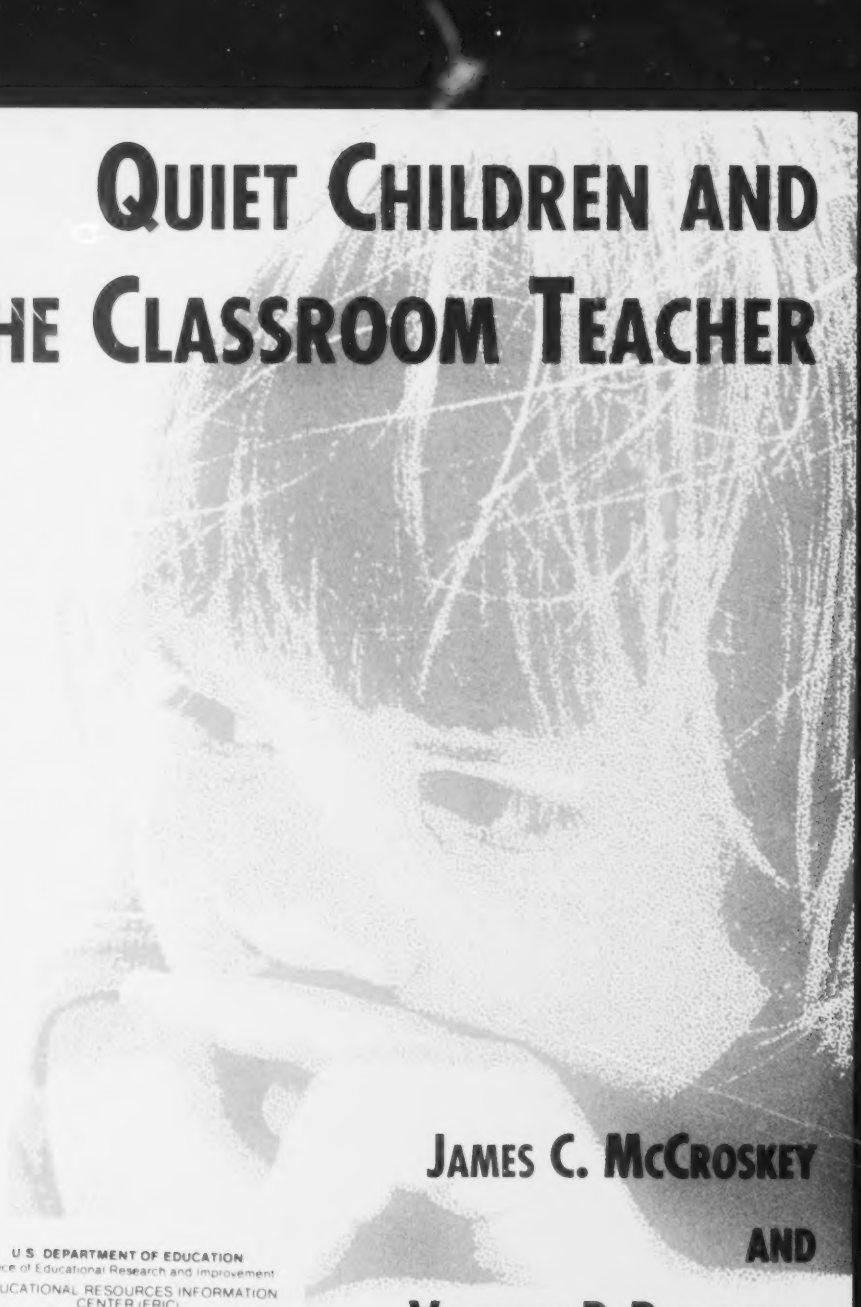

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Quiet Children and the Classroom Teacher

(second edition)

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ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills

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Part One

The Quiet Ones: Why Are They So Quiet?

In every classroom, whether in kindergarten or an adult education class, there are the quiet ones. They may be unwilling to communicate or have a fear of speaking up. They may be merely quiet by nature. These students seldom respond to the teacher voluntarily, and even less frequently do they seek to communicate with the other students in the class. In large classes, the quiet students are seldom noticed—the teacher is too busy responding to other willing students who are more demanding of attention. In smaller classes, quiet students may be noticed, but they may also be perceived by the teacher and other students as shy or unusually well-behaved. Quiet students are favorites of some teachers because they seldom cause problems and they usually require little extra effort. Other teachers—fortunately an increasing number—recognize that students who are too quiet are students with problems. Quiet children form the largest group of learning-disabled students in our classrooms. This book is designed for teachers who wish to help these children.

In the academic disciplines of human communication, psychology, and education, it has long been recognized that people vary greatly in their willingness to communicate. Until recent years, however, most of the attention from professionals in these fields has been directed towards what is commonly called "stage fright." Stage fright is the fear that a person has of giving a speech in a public setting. For an adult, this fear may be stimulated by being asked to give a speech to the local PTA or to give a presentation before a group of business associates. For a child, this fear may be present when he or she is asked to participate in show-and-tell time, present a book report, give a

report on a current event or a science project, to participate in a panel discussion before the class, or even read out loud in the reading circle. For many years stage fright was thought to be experienced by only a relatively few people; now, however, we know that stage fright is common to most people at one time or another. Stage fright, therefore, must be considered normal because it is experienced by a majority of both children and adults. This means, then, that unusually quiet children are not the only ones who experience typical stage fright. Their more verbal, outgoing peers also experience that common fear.

Over the past twenty-five years, considerable research in the field of human communication has been done on the causes and effects of differential levels of verbal activity. While the causes of these differences are somewhat elusive, several have been isolated and examined. The effects of verbal behavior, however, have emerged quite clearly from this body of research. Almost all of these studies suggest that a low willingness to communicate (quietness) is likely to produce undesirable outcomes.

We present here a summary of current theory and research concerning quiet children designed to help you understand why some of your students have a low willingness to communicate, and what impact this characteristic is likely to have on classroom communication. Specific suggestions for facilitating these children's classroom functioning are provided in the practice section. We do not offer this discussion with the purpose of helping you change quiet children into outspoken children. Radical change in an individual's communication pattern is unlikely to take place even under the most favorable circumstances of treatment or therapy. However desirable this change might be, the school classroom is not the place where it can or should be effected. The ordinary teacher is not a behavior therapist, nor is your classroom the equivalent of the psychologist's office. Our purposes in this small book, therefore, are to assist you in teaching students who are quiet and who

shall probably remain that way and, more importantly, to provide you the information necessary to avoid harming them.

Why Are Children Quiet?

Quiet children are those who perceive they can gain more—or lose less—by remaining silent than they can by talking. Almost all children and adults feel this way from time to time; quiet children are those who feel this way most of the time. When a person is confronted with an authority figure, a novel situation, or a situation in which he or she has previously failed, quietness is a normal, adaptive behavior. Even highly verbal children and adults fall silent sometimes—and that is right and healthful. Consequently, it is important to distinguish between quietness as a normal characteristic of the ordinary individual and the same behavior which occurs in some children as a result of special sets of circumstances.

Individuals with a keen desire to communicate attempt more communication and often work harder to make their communication effective. Individuals with a low desire to communicate make far fewer attempts, and often they are unconcerned with whether or not their attempts lead to successful results. In general, persons who have a low willingness to communicate tend to be less successful at achieving the benefits of communication. For example, quiet people are typically less successful at making friends, seeking out needed information, influencing others, making decisions, talking with peers, and being assertive when the occasion calls for it.

In most realms of human experience, effective communication is essential to success. Positive interpersonal relationships at work, in school, and in the home are developed as a result of effective communication among the individuals involved. Many organizations try to hire individuals who are willing to communicate and who have desirable communication skills, such as assertiveness, responsiveness, and versatility. Most occupations in contemporary society require that a person

have the potential to communicate effectively. The classroom situation is no exception. For a student to make the most of learning opportunities, it is important that he or she interact with teachers, administrators, and peers. Evaluation of learning is often based upon a teacher's observation of the student's communication. Yet, within any of these environments, there are great differences among people in the amount of communication in which they engage. In the following discussion we examine some of the causes for this variation and the effects that differential levels of willingness to communicate have on the individual.

Heredity

While it is often easy to look at children and their parents and see from whom they inherited their height, body type, eye color, facial features, hair, and other features, it is not quite so easy to determine how children come by their tendency to want to communicate or to avoid it. There is some evidence to suggest that individual differences in verbal activity are partially a function of heredity. In fact, most researchers today are much less willing to disregard the role of heredity than were scholars a decade or two ago. Some might even argue that heredity may be the single most important predictor of willingness to communicate. The contribution of heredity to communication orientations is far from fully understood.

Although genetic factors cannot totally account for variation of verbal behavior in school-age children, research does suggest that children are inherently different from one another from infancy. Major differences in the sociability of infants have been observed. This sociability is an antecedent of verbal behavior patterns that develop later. Genetic differences have also been suggested by research involving twins. For example, it has been observed that identical twins are much more alike in their verbal behavior than are same-sex fraternal twins. Such differences have not only been observed among children but have also been found to extend into adult life. For example, researchers

have found that much of the variation between individuals in social introversion can be attributed to genetic factors.

While general attitudes toward communication may be partially a function of genetics, research indicates that many major differences in school-age children cannot be attributed to this factor. Rather, data suggest that inherited characteristics are highly subject to modification by other factors within a child's environment. While heredity probably makes a contribution to the development of communication orientations like quietness, it is only one of the causal factors at work.

Childhood Reinforcement

Research in the area of learning suggests, generally, that when children are reinforced for engaging in a behavior, they are likely to repeat that behavior. On the other hand, if a child is not reinforced for a behavior, it is likely that the behavior will be extinguished, or at least will occur on a less frequent basis. A quiet child, therefore, may be seen as the product of an environment that reinforces quietness or fails to reinforce normal verbal behavior. The reasons why some children are reinforced for normal verbal behavior and others are not, are many and varied. Any number of causes for this reinforcement may not yet have been isolated through research; some causes, however, are known.

Only and first-born children, for example, tend to receive much more attention from their parents than do later-born children. Often, earlier children are the center of their parents' attention and at the center of the family environment. The parents are looking eagerly for the development of language and communication, and they are very responsive when they observe it occurring. Only children and the first-born generally tend to receive more affection, attention, and reinforcement than do other children. Communication is one among a number of areas which receive more attention and reinforcement.

Conversely, later-born children in large families tend to engage in less verbal activity than do early children. In most instances, later children receive less reinforcement for communication. They must share the attention of their parents with other children, and they receive less attention from their parents as a result. In addition, later-born children are influenced by their older siblings. While well-meaning parents will reinforce their child's communication, siblings often will not; in fact, the development of communication skills in a younger child can often pose a threat to an older child. It is not uncommon for an older child to express displeasure, often physically, when a younger child attempts to communicate. Similarly, the older child may reinforce the younger one for being quiet. In addition, parents with a sizable family are much more likely to reward quiet behavior than are parents with smaller families.

Some home environments do not place a premium on verbal behavior. Parents who truly believe that children are to be "seen and not heard" are likely to have children that fit their expectations. The highly authoritarian home, for example, tends to produce quiet children. When children in such a home do as they are told, they are reinforced; however, when they question directives from their parents, reinforcement is usually withheld. Parents who are themselves quiet tend to produce children who possess the same characteristic. If a parent has found that he or she is being rewarded for being quiet, it is likely that the parent will then reward a child more for similar behavior than would a parent not predisposed to quietness. In short, if a high level of verbal activity is not thought to be a desirable element within a family, it is unlikely that children within that family will develop a high level of verbal activity.

Some families, however, are communication-responsive. The parents themselves are verbally active, and they expect their children to demonstrate this characteristic. In this environment, the child has models who are verbally active and who are likely to reinforce the child for similar expression. The

parents actively instruct their children on communication behaviors and orientations that prompt the child to become a more responsive, versatile communicator.

Generally in the North American culture, communication is highly valued, and people who are willing to communicate are perceived positively by others in their environment. Not all cultures share this value. Some, particularly the Asian cultures, typically view as excessive what North Americans perceive to be normal verbal activity. The reinforcement pattern that a child experiences when raised in a family with a cultural orientation in favor of quietness is quite different from that of the typical North American family. When quietness is valued highly by a child's culture, it is very likely that the child will be quiet.

Whatever the reasons for children's receiving different degrees of reinforcement for communication behavior, the important point to remember is that these variations do occur. By the time children attend school for the first time, they generally have a well-established predisposition toward verbal behavior, whether positive or negative or in between. While it is possible for the school environment to produce some change in a child's predisposition toward communication, these familial and cultural patterns are firmly established. No matter how sensitive or well-intentioned teachers may be, they are quite unlikely to produce a major change immediately in a child's communication orientation, whether to quiet the noisy or enliven the quiet. We do not mean to suggest that whatever you do will be useless; on the contrary, you can be very helpful. However, a teacher who expects major, immediate change, will be disappointed.

Communication Deficiency

Another cause of quietness is communication-skill deficiency. Not all children develop the facility for language and communication at the same rate. Some children develop early, and they tend to be highly rewarded for that development.

Others develop later and, because their development is perceived to be slow, they tend to receive less reinforcement. A minority of children develop abnormally, either in terms of language acquisition or in the production of speech itself. Such language-impaired or speech-impaired children often need clinical assistance to remedy their problems. Since their communication skills have not developed at the same chronological rate as those of other children, they are likely to have missed many of the opportunities for reinforcement that a typical child would have enjoyed. Since the attempts of quiet children to communicate may have been largely ineffective, they may have learned that quietness is more likely to produce a positive result than is communication. While not all children who have language or speech impairments during their formative years will remain quiet for life, many will develop quietness as a permanent pattern.

Modeling

The tendency to imitate significant others has been found in children as young as three-to-four years old. Researchers suggest that children imitate their parents' or guardians' verbal and nonverbal behaviors. Because the parents are pleased that their child is modeling them, they reinforce (whether consciously or unconsciously) their child's behavior. As a result, the child continues the behavior.

While little formal research has been conducted regarding the imitation of communication behaviors, some evidence suggests that children observe the communication patterns of their parents, peers, siblings, grandparents, and significant others in their environment, and they attempt to emulate them. As we all know, young children growing up quickly acquire the accent and dialect of their region of the country. Similarly, modeling may explain why little boys tend to walk like their male role models, and little girls tend to walk like their female role models.

If parents are generally quiet, then the child may see this as the appropriate model, and emulate it. If the same child enters kindergarten, and then grade school, and finds that the majority of the teachers are quiet types, then the model is reinforced, and the pattern may become more firmly established. Some research suggests that children in the primary grades (kindergarten to fourth grade) may encounter teachers who are more quiet than are teachers at higher grade levels (fifth grade through high school). This research suggests further that children who are exposed to teachers who are low verbalizers may themselves become less willing to communicate. No one explanation accounts for the development of quietness; however, it is likely that emulation of parents and teachers, and to an even greater extent emulation in conjunction with reinforcement, makes a significant contribution.

Expectancy Theory

Research on quietness based on expectancy theory is still in its early stages. Expectancy theory suggests that we seek to learn "what to expect." That is, we try to discover which consequences are likely to occur as a function of our behaviors and then we try to adapt our behaviors to increase positive outcomes and avoid negative ones. Hence, if children learn that the more they talk, the more people like them and reward them, then the more likely those children are to increase their communication. Through the same process, a child learns what should and should not be said in specific contexts. Children are thus practitioners of expectancy theory when they learn what to expect under the several options open to them; not to talk, to say A, to say B, to say C, and so on. Children learn to make their behavioral choices on the basis of expectations, and some of them choose to be quiet.

Closely related to this expectancy theory is the phenomenon called "learned helplessness." In most areas of learning, children over time can develop some solid, fairly stable expectations that are continually reinforced; in other areas, children

are unable to do this. Research with laboratory animals has indicated that when animals are confronted with unpredictable situations, they become helpless and do nothing.

In the area of communication, it is quite possible that some children confront situations like those of the laboratory animals, and so do nothing. For example, no matter what they say, they cannot learn to predict the reactions of other people in their environments; hence, they do not communicate unless they absolutely have to do so. Much of this learned helplessness is thrust upon them by inconsistent reinforcement patterns. For example, the child might be reinforced for saying one thing at home, but punished for saying the same thing at school, or vice versa. When young children are inconsistently reinforced by their parents, peers, siblings, and teachers for talking, they may try to communicate as little as possible; many children learn helplessness in the communication area of their lives.

Even adults have difficulty distinguishing the situational differences that produce different responses from others, even though their own behaviors are consistent. If it is difficult for an adult, then children are even more liable to be susceptible to confusion and becoming learned-helpless. In their simplicity, children do not know how to respond, so they don't. For example, when one parent encourages a child to talk, and the other parent is telling the child to shut-up, the child may in confusion learn to withdraw into quietness. When reinforcement patterns are inconsistent and unpredictable, no expectancies may be learned at all. Helplessness, followed by communication withdrawal, is one likely result in some children.

Different Kinds of Quiet Children

Quiet children differ from one another in many ways. They can be divided, however, into five general categories: (1) children who have deficient communication skills (2) children who are socially introverted (3) children who are alienated from the surrounding society (4) children who are from an ethnic or

cultural orientation divergent from the dominant society, and (5) children who experience communication apprehension.

Skill Deficiencies

Many children have deficient communication skills. Some have deficiencies in language development or in the production of speech itself. Others are unskilled in their use of communication as a social instrument—they do not know how to talk to other people. These skill-deficient children do have in common both with each other and with "noisy" children a desire to communicate with other people. Nevertheless, although they may attempt to communicate from time to time, they will tend to be unsuccessful, and they may develop a pattern of quietness.

People who have poor skills in almost any area—cooking, shooting a basketball, speaking a foreign language, doing math—learn to avoid that area. Even though they would like very much to be successful in performing the desired behavior, they feel that they cannot succeed, and so they stop trying. Many people in this culture have withdrawn from communication situations not because of a lack of desire to communicate, but because they lack the appropriate skills.

Social Introversion

While socially introverted children may develop skill deficiencies as a result of their lack of interaction with other people, in most instances, they have the skills to communicate if they choose to do so. Socially introverted children prefer being alone to being with others. Consequently, they tend to withdraw from interaction with others, and therefore they communicate less. By the time of the preschool years and continuing throughout adult life, social introversion appears to be a fairly firmly established element of an individual's personality. Social introverts, then, are people who can communicate when they wish to do so, but who choose to remain quiet.

Social Alienation

Most people in any culture attempt to conform to the norms and values of their society. Some children, however, particularly with the onslaught of puberty, become alienated from the people around them; they may reject the goals and values of the society in which they live. After being a "reject" for a number of years, this individual will in turn reject most norms of the culture. When alienation occurs, children are very likely to avoid communication because they no longer see a benefit in communicating. In the school atmosphere, for example, the alienated child may have no desire to learn or to achieve good grades. The motivations to communicate that encourage most children, do not apply to those who are alienated. Such children may even place a negative value on communication because they see their peers, teachers, and parents employing communication in ways that they do not approve.

Ethnic/Cultural Divergence

North American society is composed of a wide variety of ethnic and cultural subgroups. Not all of these groups adhere to the same communication norms, nor do they use the same language or dialect. This divergence has little impact on children who remain within their own cultural enclave. When a child is placed in circumstances where cultural values are different, however, problems develop quickly. Children who are able to communicate effectively and be rewarded within their own group may feel out-of-place and be ineffective in another setting. Moreover, children acquire nonverbal communication patterns characteristic of their ethnic group. Skills developed in one environment (e.g., a predominantly Hispanic cultural environment) may be quite inappropriate for communication with children and teachers in, for example, a classroom in a predominantly Vietnamese environment. A child confronted with a situation of cultural divergence is likely to become withdrawn and quiet. The ethnically or culturally divergent child does not have a communication skill deficiency. The child may have excellent communication skills for the environment in which he

or she is being raised, but when placed in a different environment, the child's skills may not be appropriate. A similar problem arises when a family moves from one part of the country to another.

For example, a child who has spent her or his first six years in rural Maine will undergo a tremendous cultural adjustment if forced to attend school in metropolitan Los Angeles. Similar problems arise for children raised in rural Appalachia, on Native American reservations, in Mexican-American communities, and in other socially insular cultures. While these children are likely to remain quiet during a period of adjustment to their new cultural environment, in most cases they acquire the skills essential to functioning within the "foreign" culture. Unlike those in the other groups discussed here, children who become quiet as a result of moving from one culture to another are not likely to sustain this pattern for life. Even a highly verbal child who moves to a different cultural environment is likely to become at least temporarily quiet.

Communication Apprehension

Fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons is called "communication apprehension." By far the largest proportion of quiet children are those who are communication-apprehensive. Research suggests that as many as 20 percent of the children in any given school exhibit high levels of communication apprehension. While these children may have acceptable communication skills and may not be either introverted or alienated, they are nonetheless afraid to talk with other people. Although communication apprehension has been found to develop prior to the time a child enters school, the syndrome can also develop later, particularly in the case of a child who is forced to move from one culture to another. Not all quiet children are communication-apprehensive, but virtually all communication-apprehensive children are quiet.

Communication-apprehensive children differ from other quiet children in two important respects: They tend to have both a low self-esteem and a low level of willingness to communicate. This double negative needs to be carefully considered because research suggests that their self-perception is not necessarily justified. No substantial correlation has been observed between level of intelligence and level of communication apprehension. Thus, a child who is highly apprehensive may be just as bright (or dull) as any other child. The negative self-image that accompanies communication apprehension is, however, liable to be projected by the child to other people. In other words, people who are highly apprehensive are often perceived negatively by others. While negative self-image and high levels of communication apprehension are associated, research indicates that neither one is the cause of the other. Rather, they both appear to be the product of particular reinforcement patterns that are experienced during pre-school development and sustained after the child enters school.

"Willingness to communicate"—a personality-based predisposition that determines the degree to which people talk in a variety of contexts—is a construct that emerged in communication literature during the decade of the 1980s; it is considered to be a predispositional orientation closely related to communication apprehension. Recent research suggests that willingness to communicate and communication apprehension are substantially related. An individual's level of communication apprehension (a cognitively based construct, not a behavioral construct) is probably the single best predictor of a person's willingness to communicate. For example, the higher a child's level of communication apprehension, the lower the child's willingness to communicate. Whether a person is willing to communicate with another in a given interpersonal encounter (e.g., student with teacher) certainly is affected by the situational constraints of the encounter. While willingness to communicate is situationally dependent, an individual's willingness to communicate tends to be exhibited in regular patterns across situations.

Both the home environment and the school environment appear to contribute to the development of communication apprehension. While as many as ten percent of children in kindergarten have been found to have high levels of communication apprehension, double that proportion is found in the fifth grade. After fifth grade, the proportion remains essentially constant throughout high school, college, and adult life. Thus, although development may be more rapid for some children than for others, communication apprehension appears to develop to adult levels over the first ten years of a child's life.

One question often asked is whether a child who has a high level of communication apprehension will continue to have it as an adult. The answer is thus far elusive, but research evidence suggests an affirmative response to the question. Persons who have a high level of communication apprehension as children will probably make their social, work, school, and occupational choices, pick their potential dating and mating partners, select their housing, buy their cars, and so on, partially on the basis of their level of communication apprehension. Anecdotal evidence and case studies suggest that if one had high communication apprehension as a child, one is likely to have high communication apprehension as an adult. Most college students who have been interviewed about their high levels of communication apprehension report that they have been apprehensive for as long as they can remember.

Writing Apprehension

Although our primary concern here is with oral communication, any discussion of communication apprehension would be incomplete without considering an analogous problem: apprehension about writing. Recent research has found that a large number of young people suffer from fear of, or anxiety about, writing. These individuals, similar to those with high levels of apprehension about oral communication, tend to avoid and withdraw from situations that require them to write.

While many students with high levels of apprehension about writing also have deficient writing skills, others have normal or even above-normal skills. As a group, however, these individuals tend to avoid courses in which there are writing requirements. They usually do poorly in such classes, when they cannot avoid them, because they write shorter, lower quality papers.

Although there is some correlation between oral communication apprehension and writing apprehension, the relationship is not strong. Thus, many people who have a high level of apprehension about one form of communication may respond quite normally to the other. Teachers may be able to encourage young people with high levels of apprehension about one form of communication to communicate effectively with the other form.

Effects of Quietness

Quietness has a major impact on a person's life, whether the person is a child or adult, in school or out. In order to understand the effects of quietness in the school environment, the effects of quietness that are not directly related to the classroom need first to be examined. For the most part, quietness has a strongly negative impact on the person with this pattern of behavior.

Because the majority of children and adults who have a low willingness to communicate are quiet due to their high level of communication apprehension, quietness in them can best be understood within a framework of theory related to communication apprehension. The effects of quietness produced by other factors, such as skill deficiencies, introversion, and alienation, are essentially the same as those produced by quietness resulting from communication apprehension.

Three major theoretical propositions have been generated on the basis of extensive research about quietness and communication apprehension: (1) People who experience a high

level of communication apprehension will withdraw from, and seek to avoid, communication when possible. (2) As a result of their withdrawal from, and avoidance of, communication, these quiet people will be perceived less positively than people who experience lower levels of communication apprehension. (3) As a result of their withdrawal and avoidance behaviors, and in conjunction with the negative perceptions fostered by these behaviors, people who possess a high level of communication apprehension will experience negative effects in certain aspects of their everyday lives. Each of these theoretical propositions has received considerable support from available research. Some of this research will be briefly summarized.

Communication Avoidance

Virtually all of the studies that have tested hypotheses based on the proposition that people with high levels of communication apprehension will seek to withdraw and avoid communication have produced supportive results. For example, it has been found that, in a required public speaking course at the college level, during the first two weeks between 50 and 70 percent of the students who had high levels of communication apprehension dropped the course, while only 5 to 10 percent of other students did so. The same study found that students who avoided seeing advisors in order to register for classes tended to be disproportionately high in communication apprehension. Similar patterns have been observed at the secondary level, where classes that require extensive interaction tend to be avoided by students who are high in communication apprehension.

More recent research suggests support for a relationship between communication apprehension and indicators of student success in college. The research on student success indicates two factors that are prominent in persistence: academic success and interpersonal success. College students with higher communication apprehension will earn lower grade-point averages and are less likely to persist at a college education. Even among

those students who drop out, high communication apprehension leads to even lower grade-point averages compared to dropouts with low communication apprehension. Higher communication apprehension is associated with poorer outcomes in terms of academic achievement and persistence at the college level. Finally, communication apprehension has its biggest impact during the first two years of college. During the third and fourth years, grade-point average and dropout rates are indistinguishable from communication-apprehension levels. This suggests that teachers and advisors at the college level should be working to implement programs to assist high communication-apprehensives in the first two years of college, so that quiet collegians can persist and achieve.

A number of researchers have examined the behavior of apprehensive persons in small group interaction. It has been consistently observed that such people talk less than the average within such an environment. In addition, it has been found that when such people do participate, their contributions are likely to be quite different from those of other people. Specifically, the comments that they interject are much less likely to be relevant to the ongoing discussion. This has been explained as a function of these individuals' desire to avoid further interaction. If what a person says is not relevant, additional interaction is less likely to be pressed by other group members. Other researchers have found that people who have high levels of communication apprehension tend to avoid sitting in "high interaction" seats in a group, such as at the head of a table. In other studies, highly apprehensive people have been shown to engage in less self-disclosure than others, are less likely to accept a blind date, and interact less with peer strangers, whereas they are more likely to engage in exclusive (steady) dating, to choose occupations that require less communication than other occupations, and to select housing that is more remote than that of other people.

In short, people who are highly apprehensive in communication situations tend to construct their whole environment around the avoidance of interaction with other people. Communication-apprehensive people are quiet by choice, and they exhibit their choice in clear patterns throughout their entire lives.

Effects on Others

A number of research studies have been conducted to examine the effects on others' perceptions of an individual's quietness and withdrawn behavior. The general conclusion that can be drawn from this body of research is that quiet people are perceived negatively by others. They tend to be viewed as less socially attractive, less interpersonally similar, less competent, less sociable, less composed, and in some cases, less attractive as partners in tasks. They are perceived as exerting less leadership than others, less desirable as potential opinion leaders, and less satisfied with their job or occupation. They are thought to have poorer relationships with their peers, supervisors, and subordinates; they are judged to be less productive; and, as a result, they are less likely to advance in an organization. The only variation in this extremely negative pattern of perceptions came from one study in which a quiet person was perceived to have a somewhat higher character than others. Despite this exception, most research indicates that people who are quiet are thought of as less likable, and are appreciated less, than are more talkative, more outgoing people.

Results of Quietness

Negative attitudes toward quiet people are frequently translated into negative effects. The negative effects are not only widespread but also severe. For example, people who are quiet are discriminated against in hiring practices; they tend to have lower-paying, lower-status positions; they express much greater dissatisfaction with their jobs than do other people; they are less likely to be retained in a position than are other people; and they have less involvement in the political process than do others. Quiet people have fewer dates while in school than do

other people. Thus, we can conclude that quiet people tend to be disadvantaged in many of the social, economic, and political aspects of their lives.

Quiet People in School

Of the categories of quiet people in school, more research has focused on quiet students than on quiet teachers. Before we turn to a discussion of quiet students, however, let us review briefly what is known about quiet teachers.

Almost all of the research involving quiet teachers has been in the area of communication apprehension. Extensive research has determined that the proportion of teachers with high levels of communication apprehension is approximately the same as the proportion found in both the general population and in the student population—about 20 percent. This overall average can, however, be quite deceptive. The number of teachers suffering from this apprehensiveness varies sharply as a function of the grade level at which they teach. A disproportionate number of teachers with high levels of communication apprehension choose to teach in the lower grades. In fact, over three-fourths of communication-apprehensive teachers teach in kindergarten through the fifth grade. Thus, it may be expected that approximately one in three teachers at the elementary level is apprehensive about most communication situations.

The reason that quiet teachers gravitate toward the lower grades appears to be a function of the type of communication that is required at this level, as opposed to the type required for teaching in higher grades. To a person with a high degree of communication apprehension, teaching younger children is considerably less threatening than is teaching older children. Teaching in the upper elementary grades, middle school, high school, or college, places the instructor in an increasingly adult world. The apprehensive teacher must function as a communicative peer in many circumstances, even though he or she maintains a superordinate position in many others as

a result of established roles. The teacher who is working with young children, however, consistently remains in a dominant role in the classroom. When asked to choose the level at which they would prefer to teach, most teachers with high levels of communication apprehension indicate a preference for the elementary grades.

The effect of communication apprehension on teaching performance has not been well established, for little research has been conducted in this area. While the apprehensive teacher who is required to perform in the role of lecturer to a large group of students might not expect a great degree of success, it may well be that he or she can be just as effective as any other teacher in a different teaching environment. Research has established, however, that teachers with high levels of communication apprehension tend to give a lower value to the role and function of communication in the classroom. They tend to prefer instructional systems that reduce the amount of both teacher/student communication and student/student communication. Because the role of communication in the classroom has clearly been established as vital to learning, it might be expected that students would learn less in the classroom of a communication apprehensive. To draw this conclusion at this stage would, however, be premature: More research is needed before we can reach a conclusion on this issue. Our experience with a highly apprehensive third-grade teacher indicated that there may be less to worry about than might seem to be the case. Knowing that this teacher was extremely highly apprehensive about communication, we asked her directly how she coped with talking to a group of third-graders every school day. She responded: "Oh, that's not like talking to *real* people." What she meant, of course, was that the third-graders did not activate her communication apprehension to the extent that older people did. Thus, it may well be that the reason so many highly apprehensive people become elementary school teachers is that their young students are much less threatening communication partners than "real" older people.

Whereas the research on quiet teachers is sketchy and incomplete, research concerning quiet children in the classroom yields a much clearer picture. Researchers have investigated three general aspects of quietness: withdrawal in the classroom, perceptions of others, and effects on learning.

Withdrawal

The general pattern of withdrawal has been found to occur within the academic environment. Students with high levels of communication apprehension tend to avoid courses that require them to perform orally, such as public-speaking courses. This withdrawal tendency has been observed in other surroundings as well. For example, in the upper grades and in college, where students have some choice of classes, apprehensive students prefer large lecture classes over small classes that permit and encourage interaction among students and between students and teacher. The preferences of students who are not apprehensive about communication are quite the opposite.

Withdrawal behavior has been predictably observed in the typical classroom of 20 to 25 students. Given free choice in a classroom arranged in the traditional manner with straight rows of desks, quiet students and more verbal students differ greatly in where they choose to sit. Quiet students tend to avoid the middle seats in the first few rows, whereas more verbal students tend to, under most circumstances, strongly prefer these seats. If the classroom is arranged in a semicircular pattern, with the teacher positioned at the end of the semicircle, the more verbal students tend to prefer the seats directly opposite the teacher, whereas quiet students prefer seats along the side. If the classroom is arranged in a modular form, with several tables positioned around the room, verbal students tend to take positions at the head and foot of the tables, whereas quiet students will choose to sit on the sides. These choices are representative of the withdrawal pattern. Research has indicated that teacher-initiated interaction will, under most circumstances, be directed specifically toward the areas where the

most verbal students choose to sit, and that little teacher-initiated interaction will be directed toward the areas where the quiet students choose to sit. This behavior is consistent, whether or not students have free choice of seating; it is thus not simply a function of the teacher's response to highly verbal students.

Withdrawal can also be seen in less traditional forms of instruction, and its implications at all educational levels are clear. In personalized individualized systems of instruction, the instructional patterns permit students to work at their own pace with prepackaged materials which may involve written or electronically mediated responses. When the student is ready to take a test over the material, he or she may choose to do so. If the results of the test are not satisfactory, the student is allowed to study the material again and retake the test. If the student needs help, the teacher is available for tutorial assistance on a one-to-one basis. In this type of instructional system, it has been found that students with high levels of communication apprehension, even if they are having great difficulty mastering the content and passing the test, tend to avoid going to the teacher for help. To request help would require communication initiated by the student, an act which the apprehensive student wishes to avoid—even at the expense of doing poorly in the class.

Apprehensive students who know (or think) that they will have to speak later in a class period, learn less than when they believe they will not be asked to communicate. This suggests that such common oral activities as show-and-tell, book reports, discussions about current events, foreign-language recitations, and reading aloud are likely to retard learning not only in the subjects in which these activities are used but also in other subjects taught earlier in the day before communicative activities are scheduled to be used. Not only may we hamper quiet students in our classes by using these communicative activities, but also other teachers who use these activities may hamper the learning of our quiet students even where we do not

require oral communication of them. Apprehension about communication has the potential to be very damaging to the learning of quiet students.

We summarize that quiet students, particularly those with high levels of communication apprehension, try to place themselves in situations in the classroom where they are required to communicate less than their more verbal peers. Quiet students however, are unlikely, to be able to avoid communication demands in many situations. Because communication plays a vital role in most instructional systems, these students are placed at a distinct disadvantage in the learning process.

Perceptions by Others

Quiet students tend to be perceived negatively by others in the school environment, both by teachers and other students. Quiet students are expected to have lower academic achievement, to achieve less in the subjects taught at the elementary level, to have less satisfactory relationships with other students, and to have a lower probability of success in future education. Whether these reported expectations are the result of teachers' biases against quiet children, or they simply reflect the teachers' experience in observing what happens to quiet children in school, is unknown. Under some circumstances, teachers' expectations are highly predictive of how well children will actually do in school. The evidence suggests that a teacher's expectations become a self-fulfilling prophecy in the student: The student who is expected to do well often does as expected. Conversely, the student, who is expected to do poorly will often fulfill the teacher's expectations, also, even though that quiet student may have had the ability to do much better.

Peer perceptions of quiet people in the school environment are similar. In a study of upper-level elementary school students, it was found that quiet children were isolated from friendships and task relationships with other children. Similar studies at the high school and college levels suggest that quiet

students tend to be ignored and rejected by their more talkative peers, and that they may become social isolates. While this pattern may reflect the preferences of quiet individuals to be alone, it is at least in part an indication of the negative evaluations generated in the minds of others. In short, quiet students in the academic environment, as in other realms, tend to be perceived negatively by others in that environment.

Anecdotal evidence and qualitative studies demonstrate exactly what peers think of the high- *versus* low-communication-apprehensive students. Some of the following remarks were collected from over three hundred students in grades three through twelve. The students suggested that the students who were willing to communicate would "like to do school work," "talk too much," "do very good in school," "talk a lot," "answer a lot of questions," "be fun to play with," "probably get straight A's," "have lots of friends," "help me make friends," "do very good because he/she asks and answers a lot of questions," "would get to know the teacher," "would do well" in history, math, and English "because the teachers like students who talk." By contrast, the students suggested that the quiet students (i.e. those who had a low willingness to communicate) would "not do so good in school," "be a little bit nice," "do bad in school," "be a good boy or girl," "not get good grades," "not be in trouble," "not have any friends," "probably have something wrong with their brain," "not talk to people," "draw a lot," "read a lot," "not ask any questions," "get along with some and not with others," "do a poor job in school," "be attentive," "get assignments in on time," "not do anything but sit in the classroom," "be shy," "do okay in some classes that don't ask her/him to communicate a lot," "fail in Mr./Ms._____'s class, because he/she (the student) doesn't talk." We conclude from these statements that peers of quiet children see them as being less successful both in the academic and social part of school, although they are perceived as well-behaved. Many of the students expressed concern for their quiet peers, and they even said that they "felt sorry" for the quiet ones.

Effects on Learning

No substantial correlation has been established between the intelligence level of an individual and that individual's degree of quietness. Thus, when quiet children do fail to learn less than do others, the cause of this learning deficiency is due not to a lack of intelligence but, at least in part, to the effects of quietness itself. If this relationship could not be demonstrated, there would be little reason for the teacher to be concerned; unfortunately, these effects have been clearly established. Students with high levels of communication apprehension, as compared to their more oral peers, have been found to have lower overall grade-point averages, to register lower achievement on standardized tests administered at the completion of high school, to receive lower marks in both high school and college, and to develop more negative attitudes toward school at the junior-high, senior-high, and college levels. Briefly stated, these students learn less and like school less than do other students.

Conclusion

People vary extensively in their desire to communicate with others and in the amount of their communication. These differences in communication behavior result in different perceptions on the part of others about the quiet individual—usually, quiet people are perceived more negatively, whereas oral people are perceived more positively. Most instructional systems require oral communication for maximum learning to occur. In the educational setting, quiet students are perceived less positively, and they learn less than do other students. Therefore, quiet children pose a problem for the concerned teacher. The teacher who wishes to have a positive effect on a quiet child's learning must pay special attention to that child.

Part Two

Working with Quiet Children

Self-Analysis for Teachers

Shyness Scale (SS)

Before directing your attention to helping quiet children in your classroom, you need to analyze your own oral behavior. To begin this process, complete the following Shyness Scale.

Directions

The following fourteen statements refer to talking with other people. If the statement describes you well, circle "YES." If it describes you somewhat, circle "yes." If you are not sure whether it describes you or not, or if you do not understand the statement, circle "?". If the statement is a poor description of you, circle "no." If the statement does not describe you at all, circle "NO." There are no right or wrong answers. Answer quickly; record your first impression.

1. I am a shy person.

   YES yes ? no NO

2. Other people think I talk a lot.

   YES yes ? no NO

3. I am a very talkative person.

   YES yes ? no NO

4. Other people think I am shy.

   YES yes ? no NO

5. I talk a lot.

   YES yes ? no NO

6. I tend to be very quiet in class.

   YES yes ? no NO

7. I don't talk much.

   YES yes ? no NO

8. I talk more than most people.

   YES yes ? no NO

9. I am a quiet person.

   YES yes ? no NO

10. I talk more in a small group (3-to-6) than others do.

    YES yes ? no NO

11. Most people talk more than I do.

    YES yes ? no NO

12. Other people think I am very quiet.

    YES yes ? no NO

13. I talk more in class than most people do.

    YES yes ? no NO

14. Most people are more shy than I am.

    YES yes ? no NO

Scoring:

YES=1; yes=2; ?=3; no=4; NO=5.

To obtain your SS score, complete the following steps:

Step 1. Add the scores for items 1, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, and 12.

Step 2. Add the scores for items 2, 3, 5, 8, 10, 13, and 14.

Step 3. Complete the following formula: Shyness Score = 42 (minus) total from Step 1 (plus) total from Step 2.

Your score should be between 14 and 70.

Scores above 52 indicate a high level of shyness. Scores below 32 indicate a low level of shyness. Scores between 32 and 52 indicate an average level of shyness.

Interpretation

If you scored above 52, it is likely that you are shy and perhaps do not talk a lot. The higher your score, the more shyness you experience, and the less likely you are to be talkative. This suggests that you are quieter than most people. A high score does not necessarily mean that you are afraid to talk, but only that you prefer to be quiet in many circumstances when others would prefer to talk.

If you scored below 32, it is likely that you are not shy and probably talk a lot. The lower your score, the less shy you feel, and the more likely you are to be talkative. This suggests that you are more talkative than most people. A low score means that your own oral activity will dominate the activity of quiet children. You will need to be particularly careful not to be verbally aggressive or to expect your children to become as talkative as you are.

Scores within the moderate range (32 to 52) indicate that some situations might cause you to be shylike. In other words,

in some cases you might be quiet, and in other cases you might be verbally active.

Your score on the SS should give a fairly good indication of your normal oral activity level. If your score is incongruent with your own perceptions of your behavior, however, do not necessarily accept it at face value. Talk to someone whom you trust and who knows you well, to see if your aquaintance thinks that the scale is accurate. If you teach above the kindergarten to fourth-grade level, discuss shyness with your students to see if their perceptions of you confirm your score.

Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24)

Because we know that many teachers, as well as students, have high levels of communication apprehension, it is important for you to determine your own level of communication apprehension. In order to do this, complete the following Personal Report of Communication Apprehension.

Directions

This instrument is composed of 24 statements concerning feelings about communicating with other people. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by marking whether you (1) Strongly Agree (2) Agree (3) Are Undecided (4) Disagree or (5) Strongly Disagree. There are no right or wrong answers. Answer quickly; record your first impression.

_____ 1. I dislike participating in group discussions.

_____ 2. Generally, I am comfortable while participating in group discussions.

_____ 3. I am tense and nervous while participating in group discussions.

_____ 4. I like to get involved in group discussions.

_____ 5. Engaging in a group discussion with new people makes me tense and nervous.

_____ 6. I am calm and relaxed while participating in group discussions.

_____ 7. Generally, I am nervous when I have to participate in a meeting.

_____ 8. Usually, I am calm and relaxed while participating in meetings.

_____ 9. I am calm and relaxed when I am called upon to express an opinion at a meeting.

_____ 10. I am afraid to express myself at meetings.

_____ 11. Communicating at meetings usually makes me uncomfortable.

_____ 12. I am relaxed when answering questions at a meeting.

_____ 13. While participating in a conversation with a new acquaintance, I feel very nervous.

_____ 14. I have no fear of speaking up in conversations.

_____ 15. Ordinarily, I am very tense and nervous in conversations.

_____ 16. Ordinarily, I am very calm and relaxed in conversations.

_____ 17. While conversing with a new acquaintance, I feel very relaxed.

_____ 18. I'm afraid to speak up in conversations.

_____ 19. I have no fear of giving a speech.

_____ 20. Certain parts of my body feel tense and rigid while giving a speech.

_____ 21. I feel relaxed while giving a speech.

_____ 22. My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech.

_____ 23. I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence.

_____ 24. While giving a speech, I get so nervous I forget facts I really know.

The PRCA-24 permits computation of one total score and four subscores. The subscores are related to communication apprehension in each of four common communication contexts: group discussions, meetings, interpersonal conversations, and public speaking. To compute your scores, add or subtract your scores for each item as indicated below.

1. Group discussions
   18 (plus) scores for items 2, 4, and 6;
   (minus) scores for items 1, 3, and 5.
   Subtotal _____

2. Meetings
   18 (plus) scores for items 8, 9, and 12;
   (minus) scores for items 7, 10, and 11.
   Subtotal _____

3. Interpersonal Conversations
   18 (plus) scores for items 14, 16, and 17;
   (minus) scores for items 13, 15, and 18.
   Subtotal _____

4. Public Speaking
   18 (plus) scores for items 19, 21, and 23;
   (minus) scores for items 20, 22, and 24.
   Subtotal _____

   Total _____

Scores on the four contexts (Groups, Meetings, Interpersonal Conversations, and Public Speaking) can range from a low of 6 to a high of 30. Any score above 18 indicates some degree of apprehension. If your score is above 18 for the Public Speaking Context, you are like the overwhelming majority of Americans.

To obtain your total score for the PRCA-24, add your four subscores together. Your score should range between 24 and 120. If your score is below 24 or above 120, you have made a mistake in computing the score.

Interpretation

Any score above 65 indicates that you are more generally apprehensive about communication than the average person. Scores above 80 indicate a very high level of communication apprehension. If your scores falls in the unusually high range (over 80), this may suggest that you will have some difficulty in implementing some of the suggestions made to help quiet students, because of your own fear of communication. Scores below 50 indicate a very low level of communication apprehension. If your score is quite low, you may have less tolerance than most teachers do for people who are fearful of communication. You may have to take extra care to understand the problems that the quiet child faces. Extreme scores (below 50 or above 80) are abnormal. This means that the degree of apprehension you experience may not be associated with a realistic response to a situation. For example, people with very low scores may not experience apprehension in situations in which they should, and people with very high scores might experience apprehension in situations where there is no rational reason for the anxiety.

About 20 percent of the population falls in each extreme category. People in the average range of communication apprehension tend to respond differently in different situations; for example, in a job-interview situation, they might be highly anxious, whereas in a familiar situation (e. g., teaching in their own classroom), they might experience no anxiety or tension at all. By contrast, both low and high communication-apprehensive people tend to respond to virtually all oral communication situations in their respective characteristic manners. This means that people with high communication apprehension tend to withdraw and remain quiet. An extreme score may indicate traitlike communication apprehension, an enduring orientation about communication that usually does not change unless there is some form of intervention.

Do not necessarily accept your score at face value. If your score does not conform to your self-perceptions, consultation with peers or students may be illuminating. Merely being fearful of giving a public speech does not necessarily mean that you have a high level of communication apprehension. Many people are afraid to give speeches, but they function well in all other communication environments. Other people have little fear of public speaking, but they have great difficulty communicating in other interpersonal relationships. If you are average, you typically encounter some circumstances that make you nervous and others which do not. On the other hand, a person who is highly apprehensive is one who is fearful in many different kinds of communication situations.

Willingness to Communicate Scale (WTC)

In these twenty situations one might choose to communicate or not to communicate. Presume that you have completely free choice. Estimate the likelihood of how often you would *choose to communicate in each type of situation*, and indicate that percentage of frequency in the space at the left on a scale from 0% (= Never) to 100% (= Always).

_____ 1. Talk with a service station attendant.
_____ 2. Talk with a physician.
_____ 3. Present a talk to a group of strangers.
_____ 4. Talk with an acquaintance while standing in line.
_____ 5. Talk with a salesperson in a store.
_____ 6. Talk in a large meeting of friends.
_____ 7. Talk with a police officer.
_____ 8. Talk in a small group of strangers.
_____ 9. Talk with a friend while standing in line.
_____ 10. Talk with a waiter/waitress in a restaurant.
_____ 11. Talk in a large meeting of acquaintances.
_____ 12. Talk with a stranger while standing in line.
_____ 13. Talk with a secretary.
_____ 14. Present a talk to a group of friends.
_____ 15. Talk in a small group of acquaintances.
_____ 16. Talk with a garbage collector.
_____ 17. Talk in a large meeting of strangers.
_____ 18. Talk with a spouse (or girl/boy friend).
_____ 19. Talk in a small group of friends.
_____ 20. Present a talk to a group of acquaintances.

Items 1, 2, 5, 7, 10, 13, 16, and 18 are filler items that do not affect the outcome.

The WTC is designed to indicate how willing you are to communicate in a variety of contexts with different types of receivers. The higher your score for the WTC total score, the more willing you are to communicate generally. Similarly, the higher your subscore for a given context or audience, the more willing you are to communicate in that type of context or with that type of receiver.

The WTC permits computation of one total score and seven subscores. The subscores refer to your willingness to communicate in each of four common communication contexts and with three types of audiences. To compute your score, add your scores for each item and divide by the number indicated below.

Four Contexts	**Scoring Formula**
Group Discussion	Add scores for items 8, 15, and 19; then divide by 3.
Meetings	Add scores for items 6, 11, and 17; then divide by 3.
Interpersonal Conversations	Add scores for items 4, 9, and 12; then divide by 3.
Public Speaking	Add scores for items 3, 14, and 20; then divide by 3.
Three Audiences	**Scoring Formula**
Strangers	Add scores for items 3, 8, 12, and 17; then divide by 4.
Acquaintances	Add scores for items 4, 11, 15, and 20; then divide by 4.
Friends	Add scores for items 6, 9, 14, and 19; then divide by 4.

To compute your *total* WTC score, add the subscores for Strangers, Acquaintances, and Friends, then divide that total by 3.

Norms for WTC Scores

(> = Greater Than; < = Less Than)

Group Discussion	>89 = High WTC
	>89 = Low WTC
Meetings	>80 = High WTC
	<39 = Low WTC
Interpersonal Conversations	>94 = High WTC
	<64 = Low WTC
Public Speaking	>78 = High WTC
	<33 = Low WTC
Strangers	>63 = High WTC
	<18 = Low WTC
Acquaintances	>92 = High WTC
	<57 = Low WTC
Friends	>99 = High WTC
	<71 = Low WTC
Total WTC	>82 = High Overall WTC
	<52 = Low Overall WTC

Willingness to communicate is a mediating variable in the overall communication process. WTC and communication apprehension both have an impact on one's ability to communicate with others. As communication apprehension is heightened, feelings of discomfort increase and WTC tends to decline.

Hence, the teacher who has high communication apprehension and low WTC, is likely to have real difficulty communicating in most normal situations. The teacher who has low communication apprehension and a high WTC, is likely to have few problems communicating in most normal situations.

Identifying Quiet Students

The first step towards helping a quiet child in the classroom is to identify that child. Observation of a student's behavior in the classroom, of course, can be a very good indicator of the characteristic; however, some children are quiet in the classroom who are not quiet elsewhere. The Shyness Scale (SS) can be useful in determining whether quietness is unique to the school environment. This measure can be administered to children as young as kindergarten age. Administer the (SS) orally to children who have not yet acquired proficient reading skills. This can be done successfully with an entire class from about the fourth grade on. From about the sixth grade on, the children should be able to read the items and answer the items for themselves. For children in kindergarten through third grade, much more accurate results will be obtained if (SS) is administered individually rather than in a group. Doing the (SS) individually permits the child to ask questions if the meaning of an item is unclear.

Personal Report of Communication Fear

There are several different types of quiet children. For some quiet children, encouragement to talk may produce more verbal activity; but for others—children with high levels of communication apprehension—the more they are forced to talk, the worse their problem becomes. Consequently, one needs not only to identify quiet children but also to determine which quiet children are especially communication-apprehensive, because they must be treated differently from others.

The behaviors of highly communication-apprehensive children and the quiet children are virtually the same. Whereas one can usually distinguish between these groups by observation alone, identify apprehensive children by administering the Personal Report of Communication Fear (PRCF). The PRCF has been validated against the original measure of communication apprehension (The Personal Report of Communication Apprehension), which was developed for use with college students, and has been found to be highly correlated. The original instrument has been used in over 500 studies; it consistently yields valid results. Thus, unless a child gives false answers to the items on the questionnaire, the PRCF should provide a valid indicator of the child's level of communication apprehension.

The PRCF, like the SS, can be administered to children from kindergarten age on. For children from about the sixth grade on, the PRCF can be administered in written form to a class as a whole. For children in grades four through six, the instrument is best administered orally to the class as a whole. For children in third grade and under, better results will be obtained if the instrument is administered to each child individually.

Personal Report of Communication Fear Measure

Directions

The following 14 statements concern feelings about communicating with other people. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by circling your response. Mark "YES" if you strongly agree, "yes" if you agree, "?" if you are unsure, "no" if you disagree, or "NO" if you strongly disagree. There are no right or wrong answers. Answer quickly; record your first impression.

1. Talking with someone new scares me.

   YES yes ? no NO

2. I look forward to talking in class.

   YES yes ? no NO

3. I like standing up and talking to a group of people.

   YES yes ? no NO

4. I like to talk when the whole class listens.

   YES yes ? no NO

5. Standing up to talk in front of other people scares me.

   YES yes ? no NO

6. I like talking to teachers.

   YES yes ? no NO

7. I am scared to talk to people.

   YES yes ? no NO

8. I like it when it is my turn to talk in class.

   YES yes ? no NO

9. I like to talk to new people.

YES yes ? no NO

10. When someone asks me a question, it scares me.

YES yes ? no NO

11. There are a lot of people I am scared to talk to.

YES yes ? no NO

12. I like to talk to people I haven't met before.

YES yes ? no NO

13. I like it when I don't have to talk.

YES yes ? no NO

14. Talking to teachers scares me.

YES yes ? no NO

Scoring:

YES = 1, yes = 2, ? = 3, no = 4, NO = 5

To obtain the score for the PCRF, complete the following steps:

Step 1: Add the scores for the following items: 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, and 12.

Step 2: Add the scores on the following items: 1, 5, 7, 10, 11, 13, and 14.

Step 3: Compute the following: 42 (plus) total of Step 1 (minus) total of Step 2.

Your score should be between 14 and 70.

The normal range of scores on the PRCF is between 28 and 47. Students who score above 47 are most likely communication-apprehensive. These are the children who need very careful, special attention. Those who score below 28, on the other hand, are very low in communication apprehension. These children are likely to be highly verbal, and they often will be the students who are most disruptive in the classroom. They are also those who most likely will do well in a traditional instructional system. In addition, they are frequently well-liked by other students and, unless they are particularly disruptive, well-liked by their teachers.

Our primary concern in this section is with those children who have high scores on the PCRF. Before we make suggestions about working with these communication-apprehensive children, we offer the following general advice concerning communication in the classroom that may be helpful for all students. If these suggestions are implemented, helping the quiet child, particularly the communication-apprehensive child, will become easier.

Developing a Communication-Responsive Classroom

A classroom is an extension of a teacher's personality. If one were to walk through the halls of a school, going from one classroom to another, one would notice extreme differences in the type and amount of communication that occurs in each. Some classrooms are very teacher-centered—almost all interaction is between the teacher and the students. Other classrooms involve a large amount of student/student interaction. Still other classrooms are a blend of these two extremes. Because, in most instructional systems, oral communication plays a vital role in the learning process, it is important that a communication-permissive atmosphere be developed. While this has implications for all students' learning, it is particularly important for quiet students. If communication with other students and with the teacher is easy, it is much more likely that a student, even a quiet one, will engage in communication. If communication is restricted in the classroom, however, this will have a noticeable effect on quiet children: They will become more withdrawn.

A teacher can develop a communication-permissive climate, simply and straightforwardly, by reinforcing students in their communication with others. Although a communication-permissive atmosphere also encourages some conversations that are not directly conducive to learning, one can accept this in order to ensure that learning-related communication is enhanced. The establishment of a communication-permissive climate lays a foundation for helping the quiet children. Without this foundation, many of the suggestions presented will have a minimal chance of being effective. Some techniques for supporting communication in the classroom are as follows: Ask the students to break into smaller groups to discuss the subject matter under consideration. Join one of these groups for a while, and then move to another group. Rearrange straight-row seating (traditional classroom seating). Allow the students freedom

to get up from their seats and move to other parts of the room to communicate with other students.

Punishment

The one behavior that is most often the object of punishment in the traditional classroom is talking. And yet, talking is vital to the learning process. Few teachers consciously punish students merely for talking; rather, teachers punish children in the classroom for behavior that is disruptive to the class. Behavior deemed to be disruptive by one teacher, however, may not be disruptive to another. The task for the teacher is a fairly simple one: Distinguish between talking that is productive and constructive, and talking that is nonproductive and disruptive.

Classroom order must be maintained, and classroom behavior must be controlled. Behavior disruptive of the learning process must not be allowed to occur repetitively. To maintain order and control behavior, punishment is sometimes needed in a classroom. With the exception of the truly unusual teacher who can use positive reinforcement to modify all types of behavior, all teachers need to use reasonable punishment from time to time.

The matter that we consider important is this: *Communication itself should never be the object of punishment.* When a student is disruptive, it must be made clear not only to that student but also to the other members of the class that the punishment is for disruption, not for communication.

When a teacher does not carefully make this distinction, quiet children (particularly those with high levels of communication apprehension) will observe that others are punished for communicating, and they will quickly learn that if they keep quiet, they will escape like treatment. Unfortunately, quiet children will generalize this learning and refrain from communicating, even when appropriate communication would facilitate their learning. The teacher, then, must be very careful to clarify the reason for discipline. For example, saying: "No talking dur-

ing tests! Come here if you have a problem!" is far less preferable than asking: "Would you come here and tell me the problem so that we don't disrupt the class?"

Oral Performance

In most classrooms, and in virtually all classrooms in the elementary grades, oral performance is a common element of the teaching process. Oral performance may consist of exercises that range from answering a question (either spontaneously or when called upon) to presenting a report or making a speech while standing before the class. This ordinary experience can be an unpleasant one for the quiet student. Oral performance is threatening to all children at one time or another, and it may be particularly fearsome on many occasions for quiet children, especially for those with high levels of communication apprehension and a low willingness to communicate.

The use of oral performance in the classroom is a valid and important instructional strategy. This method permits students to practice their own communication skills in a supportive and rewarding environment. This is a particularly valuable experience for children who have moderate or low levels of communication apprehension. What is valuable and beneficial to some children, however, is not necessarily so to others. The student who has high communication apprehension is the exception. To force an apprehensive student to communicate is harmful because it increases, rather than reduces, the apprehension. The teacher, therefore, needs to establish an instructional system in the classroom that *permits* oral participation in the learning process, not one that *demands* it of all students.

Working with Communication-Apprehensive Children

The child with a high level of communication apprehension presents a special problem to the classroom teacher. This child is not merely quiet but also afraid to communicate. Many

teachers, particularly those who themselves possess low levels of communication apprehension and high levels of willingness to communicate, have great difficulty understanding how and why a child could be afraid to speak up. Often these well-meaning teachers will institute "treatment" procedures that they think will help, procedures which usually involve forcing a student to communicate. Unfortunately, this approach does far more harm than good. Forcing a frightened child to communicate is like throwing a person who does not know how to swim into deep water, or making a person who is afraid of heights walk a tight rope. The non-swimmer is liable to drown, the person afraid of heights will certainly fall, and the child who is afraid to speak will become more afraid to communicate. That quiet child also is highly liable to dislike the teacher intensely, and possible to dislike school altogether.

As a teacher or parent, you are not necessarily a therapist. The suggestions that we offer are not designed to "cure" communication apprehension. Rather, we have designed methods to assist you in helping an apprehensive child to operate within the educational environment. The key to this process is making the child comfortable in the classroom. If the classroom atmosphere is permissive toward communication, if communication is never the object of punishment, and if oral performance is encouraged but not required, the classroom will become a much less threatening environment for the child. We offer the following suggestions towards achieving this goal.

Alternatives to Oral Performance Assignments

If oral performance is not required of every student, some alternatives must be made available. Be aware that many children with high commuinication apprehension prefer to do assignments in written, rather than oral, form. While not all assignments appropriate for oral presentation can be easily converted to a written form, this can generally be accomplished. Offer children who dislike *and* those who like communicating orally the option of presenting their assignments in written

form. Both types of students will have an opportunity to learn, but more important than that, they will have an opportunity to demonstrate their accomplishments without having the evaluation of their performance biased by their level of communication apprehension. Testing, while normally done in written form, is sometimes accomplished orally. For the child with oral communication apprehension, this procedure must be studiously avoided. The literate child should be allowed to be tested with written forms. Test-taking is already a situation fraught with its own reasons for apprehension without adding the fear of communication to the process.

Students who have high levels of communication apprehension and low levels of willingness to communicate are intimidated by oral participation in class. They hesitate to speak up on a voluntary basis, and, when called upon, they will frequently fail to respond even when they think they know the answer. Consequently, oral participation in class discussion should remain voluntary. A written test is an adequate method of evaluating learning; it is more appropriate than an unsystematic observation of oral participation in the classroom; it is the only means of allowing students apprehensive about speaking up to demonstrate what they know without having the results negatively affected by communication apprehension.

Under some circumstances, it is considered highly desirable, even necessary, for students to interact in order to learn. When this is the case, it is far preferable for the quiet student to work in a small group than to be required to interact with the whole class. In small groups, more possibilities exist for participation on the part of everyone involved, and the smaller group will tend to be far less threatening to the apprehensive child. The point for you, the teacher, to remember is that when oral parti-cipation is vital to learning, encourage it in the most comfortable format for the apprehensive student.

Seating Arrangements in the Classroom

Students with high levels of communication apprehension choose to sit in places in the classroom different from where students with moderate or low levels of communication apprehension prefer to sit. These choices are a function of the talkative students' desire to communicate and the quiet students' desire not to communicate. Each student's willingness to communicate deserves to be respected. One of the most potentially harmful things you can do is to force a child with a high level of communication apprehension and low willingness to communicate to sit in a high-interaction area of the classroom. While the child will probably not talk any more than if he or she were sitting somewhere else, the threat of having to communicate will be felt much more consistently. When students are apprehensive about communication, they concentrate on the subject matter only with grave difficulty. Putting a highly apprehensive child in a high-interaction area is not only unlikely to increase the child's interaction but also it will decrease the child's learning.

Many teachers assign students to seats, perhaps to make it easier to learn names at the beginning of a class, or perhaps to control behavior. In any event, permanent seating assignments ought to be based upon each student's needs rather than on some arbitrary system. The most commonly employed system of this type is alphabetical assignment. Alphabetical seating assignments virtually guarantee that many children will not be in the area of the classroom that is most conducive to their learning.

An alternative for the teacher who wants to establish a set seating chart is to allow the children initially to sit wherever they like. After several days of free-choice seating, most of the children will have chosen a seat that is comfortable for them. These seats, then, can become the seats to which the children are permanently assigned. If need arises later for shifting seat assignments, particularly if some children are prone to be dis-

ruptive, the teacher must take care not to punish a quiet child with a discomforting seat assignment in order to stop the disruptive behavior of others. Moving an apprehensive child into a high-interaction area in order to move a disruptive child out of that area, may solve one problem while exacerbating another.

Group Work

Many teachers have students work routinely in groups to complete an assignment. This effective method of instruction is particularly beneficial to the student with a high level of communication apprehension. In the small-group environment, apprehensive students are much more likely to talk than when they are forced to address the class as a whole; they are also much more likely to be encouraged by their peers to talk. If the groups are to report on the product of their efforts it is quite acceptable that the apprehensive student not be designated to give the report. When the choice of a reporter is left to the group itself, it is rare for the group to select a highly apprehensive member. Consequently, instruction that uses the group method and allows the group to select their spokesperson, is a very nonthreatening instructional method that does not harm the students with high levels of communication apprehension, and, at the same time, is beneficial to others.

Individualized Instruction

The teacher who is responsive to the needs of communication- apprehensive students is well-advised to employ individualized instruction. Adapt and individualize your instruction to the needs of each student, involving yourself in as much one-to-one interaction between the student and yourself as time allows. This is a good instructional method whether you are dealing with communication apprehensive students or not.

Good individualized instruction depends on your ability to make the student comfortable while communicating with her or him. This individualized method has the greatest probability of success, even more so if you yourself have a moderate-to-high

level of communication apprehension and a lower willingness to communicate. If you are a teacher with little apprehension and a high willingness to communicate, you may be too verbal, too oral, and too aggressive; you overpower the quiet student in a one-to-one setting. If however, you can establish a good rapport with the student, and ensure a setting in which the student feels comfortable in communicating, the probability of the student's increasing her or his willingness to talk is quite high. Gentle, measured reinforcement, if continued over a long period of time, may actually reduce the quiet student's fear of communication.

Grading and Class Participation

Even though students who have high levels of communication apprehension do not like to speak up in class, their interaction in the classroom is essential both to their learning and your ability to grade them. How can you avoid decreasing opportunities for oral participation in the class when speaking up is so undesirable to some? You can solve this by encouraging oral participation and by eliminating penalties for nonparticipation. The primary penalty for nonparticipation—other than being directly called upon—occurs when the amount of participation becomes a criterion for grading. In some cases, teachers report basing as much as 50% of a student's grade on class participation.

Quiet students' grades should not be based on oral class participation. This style of assessment penalizes students who are afraid to communicate. Likewise, it would be unfair not to allow highly verbal students to perform in the way that is most comfortable for them. Your task is to remember that communication apprehension and intellectual ability are not correlated; "talks all the time" does not mean "smart" and "quiet" does not mean "ignorant." Grade your students on what they know, not on how they present themselves.

Grading on oral participation is usually employed in the hope that it will encourage greater participation. This is probably true for most students, but the exact opposite is true for those with high levels of communication apprehension. Grading on oral participation can only cause the highly apprehensive student to become more nervous than he or she already is. Base your evaluations on what your students know, not on how much they talk.

Teaching Reading

One of the most difficult tasks for teachers in the elementary school is teaching children to read. Reading is a vital skill which an individual in contemporary society must master. The common phrase "reading is fundamental" is accurate.

Teaching the quiet child to read presents a special, even more severe, problem to the elementary teacher. Not all children develop language at the same rate and not all learn to speak the sounds of the English language at the same rate. Children in the first grade, for example, may vary as much as two years in their level of language development and mastery of speech production, and still be considered normal. Thus, some children are not yet school-age when they develop the necessary skills to learn to read, whereas other children must be placed in special reading classes long after their schoolmates have developed these necessary skills.

This problem of uneven development is greatly aggravated by the usual method of instruction—oral reading. Teachers must be able to distinguish between competence in reading, and ability in the performance of oral reading. Very often, children can read words silently that they cannot say. Some children learn to read more by using their sight than by using their hearing; reading for them is directly visual, not indirectly aural and oral. Extreme dependence on oral reading techniques as a teaching method in the early period of reading instruction, therefore, presents problems to many students. For the child

who is quiet, and particularly the child who is highly apprehensive, these problems are severe.

One of the more anxiety-producing events in the typical school experiences of a child with a high level of communication apprehension is reading aloud in class. This child has the same problems that others have in terms of reading itself and, at the same time, oral performance constrains the apprehensive child with its special limitations. Highly apprehensive children are often incorrectly perceived as poor readers. Unfortunately, they may actually *become* poor readers over a period of time because their communication apprehension has interfered with the learning process. At the earlier stages, however, no reasons compel us to expect that a child with a high degree of communication apprehension will be a better or poorer reader than any other child.

If you avoid overdependence upon oral reading as a method of reading instruction, you may make it possible for your quiet students to learn to read. Ask the quiet child to read silently, and invite your apprehensive reader to tell you what the text says and means. In this way, you can determine the quiet child's level of reading competence without the distortion of an apprehensive oral performance. This approach can be further enhanced through individualization. While practical limitations may require students to read in groups, if reading can be individualized, you will not only be able to make a more accurate assessment of the child's reading development but you will also be able to work with your reader in the least threatening type of situation: one-to-one. If at all possible, avoid requiring that a child with a high level of communication apprehension attempt to read aloud before the class. Demanding oral performances will not only aggravate the communication apprehension problem but also can retard the quiet child's reading development.

Teaching Oral Communication

Every teacher is a speech teacher. In the first years of school, the teacher uses show-and-tell, bring-and-brag, or similar assignments to encourage speaking abilities. As a student moves through the grades, the assignments of current-event reports, book reports, science demonstrations, and the like, serve the same function. When the student enters high school and college, it is probable he or she will be asked to take a public-speaking course. The common purpose of all of these assignments is to teach the student to communicate orally before a group.

These assignments are useful and beneficial to most children, and they can certainly be encouraged. You must take great care, however, to avoid using these assignments with highly apprehensive children. Provide alternative assignments whenever possible. In place of oral current-events reports, oral book reports, and oral science demonstrations, allow the substitution of written assignments.

The teacher of public speaking, of course, is confronted with a unique situation: There is really no alternative. Public speaking classes should not be required of quiet students unless a program is in operation to provide clinical treatment for communication apprehension. When public speaking is a required course, many students with high levels of communication apprehension are put into a potentially harmful situation. While public speaking is beneficial for most students, the threatening experience can induce a traumatic reaction in highly apprehensive young people. These individuals may actually leave school rather than subject themselves to this requirement so at variance with their personalities. Quiet students who remain in the public-speaking class may be so disturbed by the experience that their performance in other subjects will greatly deteriorate.

This caution does not apply, however, to more commonly required "principles of oral communication" courses. While stu-

dents in these courses may have the opportunity to give speeches, so long as alternatives are provided as substitutes (for example, group discussion projects) the potential for harm in having to make a highly threatening public speech is negligible, and the teacher, administrator, or parent need have no concern. Classes in oral communication can be of considerable value to all students, particularly the quiet ones. Research has confirmed that instruction in interpersonal communication can make a substantial contribution toward reduction of communication apprehension in quiet young people.

The teacher of oral communication needs to remember, as does every teacher, that children are not all alike. Instruction that is beneficial to one child may not be beneficial to another. The best instruction is that which is adapted to the abilities and limitations of each individual.

Referring Students for Special Help

Although you can both avoid hurting quiet students and even help them, the ordinary classroom is not the place for therapy; teachers are not therapists. Some young people need more help than they can receive in the regular classroom. These individuals need to be referred to specialists to obtain the assistance that they need. You confront two questions in this situation: Which young people need you refer for help? To whom shall you refer them?

While some quiet students can adapt to the demands of their school environment fairly well, many others cannot. The decision to refer an individual for special help should be based on both reliable information and good judgment. The information needed is of two kinds: scores on the SS and PRCF (see above, pp. 27-43), and observations of the young person's behavior, especially his or her willingness to communicate with others. If your observations are consistent with the scores, that is, if there is clear evidence of withdrawal and avoidance, the young person should definitely be referred. You are the judge of

whether the observed behavior represents a consistent pattern of withdrawal and avoidance.

The second question is more difficult: Your ability to refer quiet students who need help depends on your local circumstances. If your school has a special program designed for this purpose, the answer is easy, but if no such program exists, the solution becomes complicated. Quiet students should not be referred automatically to speech therapists, physicians, or school nurses, because none of these individuals is necessarily trained to provide the special help needed. Because of this lack of training, many well-meaning professionals have aggravated the problem of the quiet child. Some school counselors, particularly those with experience in the use of behavior therapy techniques, are trained to provide assistance, but many do not have this training. Others may be so overloaded that they cannot spare the time. Thus, before referring a quiet student to a school counselor, check with the counselor to see if he or she can, indeed, be of help.

In larger communities, clinical psychologists (as opposed to psychiatrists) are generally available. These professionals are usually well-prepared to provide the assistance that quiet young people need. In most circumstances, you can refer quiet students to local clinical psychologists with the confidence that help will be available, and that, should you have misdiagnosed a young person's problem, no serious psychological problem or financial drain will result. As a general rule, you may follow the guideline that it is better to refer a young person who does not need help than to fail to refer one who does.

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